

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A method of obtaining technical support for a data-processing device, comprising initiating a support session during which device-specific data is conveyed from the device to a support provider to assist the support provider in responding to a support query, and polling the support provider for a response to the query, on a repeated and automated basis, until a response becomes available or the support session is terminated.
2. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the polling is effected by a polling application obtained from the support provider.
3. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein the polling application, during the support session, is executed subsequent to each boot or start-up sequence of the device.
4. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein the polling application, during the support session, is stored on or on behalf of the device, in a manner whereby the application is executed subsequent to each boot or start-up sequence of the device.
5. (original) A method according to claim 3 wherein, in a Windows O.S. environment, a Run key located in or operatively associated with the registry of the device is used to execute the application, subsequent to each said boot or start-up sequence.

6. (original) A method according to claim 5 wherein, upon termination of the support session, the Run key is removed or disabled.
7. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein the application subsequently is deleted using a delete command executed in accordance with a Run Once key located in or operatively associated with the registry.
8. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein the support session is established using a web connection and wherein the polling application is downloaded from the support provider using an applet.
9. (original) A method according to claim 8 wherein the applet is operative to download a data harvester to gather the device-specific data.
10. (original) A method according to claim 8 wherein the applet is used only in response to an indication of trust being given by a user of the device.
11. (original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the support provider conveys to the user a trust request, agreement to the request allowing execution of the applet.
12. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the polling is effected using HTTP.

13. (original) A method of providing asynchronous web-based active technical support from a support provider to a user of an electronic device during a support session, the method comprising receiving device-specific data to assist the support provider in responding to a support query, dispatching a polling application operative to poll the support provider for a response to the query and notifying the user that a response has become available, the polling application being dispatched, from or on behalf of the support provider, in response to an instruction generated using a trusted applet.

14. (original) A server-side technical support source comprising a web server to participate in asynchronous messaging with a client-side device, the support source being operative to supply, to the device, a polling application whereby repeated polling of the support source for a response to a support query may be effected, the polling application being supplied to the device using a trusted applet.

15. (currently amended) A software element on a computer readable medium for use in the provision of technical support to a user of a data-processing device ~~which~~, the software element being, in response to an indication of trust being given by the user, ~~is~~ operative to effect or permit a download of a polling element whereby a support provider may be polled, on a repeated and automated basis, for a response to a support query.

16. (original) A software element according to claim 15 in the form of an applet, the polling element being transmissible from the support provider using HTTP.

17. (original) A software element according to claim 16 wherein the polling element has a data footprint of no more than about 50 KB.

18. (original) A method of obtaining technical support for a data-processing device, comprising:

establishing a support session using a web connection during which device-specific data is conveyed from the device to a support provider to assist the support provider in responding to a support query;

downloading a polling application from the support provider using a trusted applet and polling, using the polling application, the support provider for a response to the query, on a repeated and automated basis, until a response becomes available or the support session is terminated.

19. (original) A method according to claim 18 wherein the polling application, during the support session, is executed subsequent to each boot or start-up sequence of the device.

20. (original) A method according to claim 18 wherein the applet is operative to download a data harvester to gather the device-specific data.